

To John Bruce

30 Dec 40

My dear Sir

I wrote to Amyot for his advice, upon a point rather interesting to me, and he gave it me, I am afraid, more according to his wishes than his convictions; but it renders it necessary for me to trouble you.

The matter touches our projected edition of Shakespeare under the sanction of the Society - a suggestion proceeding from yourself, and in the execution of which I said that I would lend you my aid.

Now it so happens that a

^{day} or two ago a proposal was sent to me by a respectable Bookseller, the upshot of which was that he would give me £500 if I would edit for him an edit. of Shakespeare in eight or nine volumes. 000

I gave him no answer. I said that I had gone to a certain length with you in a project of the kind for the Shakespeare Society, and that I must first consult you and some other friends.

The offer would, doubtless, never have been made but for the alarm the bookseller has taken lest the Shakespeare Society should supersede them in the market, as far as regards the works of our great Dramatist.

The affair remains exactly where I have told you. I do not for one

moment affect to deny that £500 (& procured in a way so consistent with my literary pursuits & likings) is a sum that would be very agreeable and convenient to me; but if you think that I am so far pledged to you & the Society that I ought (under the circumstances of the scheme being merely private & inchoate & not hinted at, much less promised, in the prospectus) to adhere to my original intention, I am most ready to do it. What I ought to do I will do.

Ameyol says that I ought not to think of refusing, but as I said he is partial to my interests.

I am sadly afraid, under the impulse of the £500, of doing something that looks unbecomingly to you who have always treated me so kindly

and flatteringly, if there be such an
adverb.

It is to you I am bound
if to any body, because the scheme
have never been mentioned in the
Council.

Let me hear from you plainly
before Sunday
and perhaps you might see August
and talk over the matter with him
in the interval. And I dreamed
that such a proposal would have been
made I would have told you so at
once: it came quite by surprise upon me
as it will, perhaps, upon you. I am
My dear Sir

Most sincerely yours

J. Payne Collier

24 Brompton Sq.
Decr. 30th. 1840.